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114 Yule (afterwards Sir Henry Yule) published in the Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society * a much more detailed description of the hills and their inhabitants than had been given by Fisher. This formed the basis of many subsequent descriptions, the best known of which is the attractive account contained in the second volume of Sir Joseph Hooker's *Himalayan Journals* † published in London in 1854. Sir Joseph visited Cherrapunji in June 1850, and stayed in the hills until the middle of the following November.

797 177 175 Meanwhile the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Mission, originally located at Sylhet, had extended their operations to Cherrapunji, and in 1842 established a branch there. They applied themselves to the study of the Khasi language, for which, after a trial of the Bengali, they resolved to adopt the Roman character. Their system of expressing the sounds of Khasi has since that time continued in use, and after sixty years' prescription it would be difficult to make a change. Their Welsh nationality led them to use the vowel *y* for the obscure sound represented elsewhere in India by a short *a* (the *u* in the English *but*), and for the consonantal *y* to substitute the vowel *i*: *w* is also used as a vowel, but only in diphthongs (*ăw*, *ew*, *iw*, *ow*); in other respects the system agrees fairly well with 114 the standard adopted elsewhere. Primers for the study of the language were printed at Calcutta in 1846 and 1852, and in 1855 appeared the excellent "Introduction to the Khasia language, comprising a grammar, selections for reading, and a Khasi-English vocabulary," of the Rev. W. Pryse. There now exists a somewhat extensive literature in Khasi, both religious and secular. An exhaustive grammar, by the Rev. H. Roberts, was

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142 young are comely, of a buxom type, and, like the men, with highly-developed calves, the latter always being considered a beauty. The children are frequently remarkably pretty. Khasis carry very heavy burdens, it being the custom for the 482 cooly of the country to carry a maund, or 82 lbs. weight, or even more occasionally, on his back, the load being fixed by means of a cane band which is worn across the forehead; women carry almost as heavy loads as the men. The coolies, both male and female, commonly do the journey between Cherrapunji and Shillong, or between Shillong and Jowai, in one day, carrying the heavy loads above mentioned. Each of the above journeys is some thirty miles. They carry their great loads of rice and salt from Therria to Cherrapunji, an ascent of about 4,000 feet in some three to four miles, in the day. The Khasis are probably the best porters in the north of India, and have frequently been requisitioned for transport purposes on military expeditions.

157 The people are cheerful in disposition, and are light-
522 hearted by nature, and, unlike the plains people, seem to thoroughly appreciate a joke. It is pleasant to hear on the road down to Theriaghat from Cherrapunji, in the early morning the whole hillside resounding with the scraps of song and peals of laughter of the coolies, as they run nimbly down the short cuts on their way to market. The women are specially cheerful, and pass the time of day and bandy jokes with passers-
[461] by with quite an absence of reserve. The Khasis are certainly more industrious than the Assamese, are generally good-tempered, but are occasionally prone to sudden outbursts of
[533] anger, accompanied by violence. They are fond of music, and
[797] rapidly learn the hymn tunes which are taught them by the Welsh missionaries. Khasis are devoted to their offspring,
593 and the women make excellent nurses for European children,
463 frequently becoming much attached to their little charges. The people, like the Japanese, are fond of nature. A Khasi
517 loves a day out in the woods, where he thoroughly enjoys
824 himself. If he does not go out shooting or fishing, he is con-
825 tent to sit still and contemplate nature. He has a separate name for each of the commoner birds and flowers. He also has names for many butterflies and moths. These are traits which are not found usually in the people of India.

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plains, jealous of their power, brave in action, and have an aversion to falsehood."

Khasis of the interior who have adopted Christianity are generally cleaner in their persons than the non-Christians, and their women dress better than the latter and have an air of self-respect about them. The houses in a Christian village are also far superior, especially where there are resident European missionaries. Khasis who have become Christians often take to religion with much earnestness (witness the recent religious revival in these hills, which is estimated by the Welsh missionaries to have added between 4,000 and 5,000 converts to Christianity), and are model Sabbatarians, it being a pleasing sight to see men, women, and children trooping to church on a Sunday dressed in their best, and with quite the Sunday expression on their faces one sees in England. It is a pleasure to hear the sound of the distant church bell on the hill-side on a Sunday evening, soon to be succeeded by the beautiful Welsh hymn tunes which, when wafted across the valleys, carry one's thoughts far away. The Welsh missionaries have done, and continue to do, an immense amount of good amongst these people. It would be an evil day for the Khasis if anything should occur to arrest the progress of the mission work in the Khasi Hills.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

The Khasis inhabit the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, although there are a few Khasi settlers in the neighbouring plains districts. The Census Report of 1901 gives the following figures of Khasi residents in the plains:—

Cachar	333
Sylhet	3,083
Goalpara	4
Kamrup	191
Darrang	10
Nowgong	29
Sibsagar	62
Lakhimpur	22
Lushai Hills	77
North Cachar	32
Naga Hills	62

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There are also syntactical agreements. We may take it as finally proved by Dr. Grierson and Professor Kuhn that the Mon-Khmêr, Palaung, Wa, and Khasi languages are closely connected. In the section of the Monograph which deals with language some striking similarities between the languages of these tribes will be pointed out. We have not so far been able to discover social customs common to the Palaungs and the Khasis; this is probably due to the conversion of the Palaungs to Buddhism, the change in the religion of the people having possibly caused the abandonment of the primitive customs of the tribe. In a few years' time, if the progressive rate of conversions of Khasis to Christianity continues, probably the greater number of the Khasi social customs will have disappeared and others will have taken their place, so that it cannot be argued that because no manifest social customs can now be found common to the Khasis and the Palaungs, there is no connection between these two tribes. The strong linguistic affinity between these two peoples and the wild *Was* of Burma points to an intimate connection between all three in the past. As knowledge of the habits of the wild *Was* improves, it is quite possible that social customs of this tribe may be found to be held in common with the Khasis. With regard to social affinities it will be interesting to note the Palaung folk-tale of the origin of their Sawbwa, which is reproduced in Sir George Scott's Upper Burma Gazetteer. The Sawbwa, it is related, is descended from the Naga Princess Thusandi who lived in the *Nat* tank on the Mongok hills and who laid three eggs, from one of which was born the ancestor of the Palaung Sawbwa. Here we see how the Palaung regards the egg, and it is noteworthy that the Khasis lay great stress on its potency in divination for the purposes of religious sacrifices, and that at death it is placed on the stomach of the deceased and is afterwards broken at the funeral pyre. Amongst some of the tribes of the Malay Archipelago also the *Gaji-Guru* or medicine-man "can see from the yolk of an egg, broken whilst sacramentally counting from one to seven, from what illness a man is suffering and what has caused it." Here we have an almost exactly parallel case to the Khasi custom of egg-breaking.

In the Palaung folk-tale above referred to the importance of

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Nongwar, thirty-one stills; and Rangthang, thirty-seven stills.

From what has been stated above some idea may be gathered how very large the number of stills in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills is. I am not in a position to state with any degree of accuracy what is the amount of spirit manufactured or consumed in the year, but it is very considerable. The out-turn of a Khasi still has been reckoned at from four to eight bottles per day. From this estimate, and the fact that there are 1,530 stills in the district, it may be roughly calculated what is the consumption annually. Practically the whole of the spirit is consumed within the district. The liquor which is manufactured is far stronger than the spirit distilled in the ordinary out-stills in the plains. It has been stated by an expert analyst that the Khasi spirit contains 60 to 80 per cent. of proof spirit, and that it possesses "an exceptionally nice flavour and taste." The usual price at which it is sold is 4 to 6 annas a quart bottle, a second quality being sometimes sold for 3 annas. It will be seen that the liquor is exceedingly cheap. A Khasi in the villages of the interior can get drunk for 2 annas,* or a quarter of an ordinary coolie's daily wage. Drunkenness prevails on every market day at Cherrapunji, Jowai, and other large hâts, and on occasions when there are gatherings of the people for various purposes. This cheap but strong spirit is demoralizing the people, and some restriction of its use would be welcomed by many. In the Khasi Welsh Methodist Church abstention from liquor is made a condition of Church membership, but the vast number of stills and the facilities with which liquor can be obtained are a constant source of temptation to the Christian community, and cause many defections.

GAMES.

The Khasis have many games, but their principal game is archery, this may be said to be the national game, and is a very popular form of recreation amongst them, the sport being indulged in from about the beginning of January to the end of

* About threepence.

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The adoption of a female obviates the family dying out (*iap duh*), which to the Khasi is a very serious matter, inasmuch as there will then be no one qualified to place the bones of its members within the family tomb (*ka ba thep shieng mawbah*), and to perform the requisite funeral ceremonies. Amongst the Khasis no particular ceremonies are performed at the time of adoption; but some of the Syntengs observe a religious ceremony which consists largely of a feast to the clans-folk, at which liquor, rice, dried fish, and ginger are partaken of. Before the feast commences, each clansman is provided with a small gourd (*u klong*) filled with liquor, a little of the latter is then thrown on the ground from the gourd, and the following words are uttered:—

"Oh, God! oh, Lord! oh, ruling king Biskurom, now the *pynrap iing* ceremony is about to be performed, let the ceremony be propitious, and let males and females (of the clan) increase in numbers, so that the clan may become great, and respected, and that intelligent male members may spring up." No such ceremony is, however, observed, it is understood, in the Nartiang and Raliang doloiships.

In the case of a family being *iap duh* (extinct), the family property, according to Khasi custom, passes to the Siem. Therefore it is to the interest of the members of families to adopt a female, when such necessity arises. As there is no religious ceremony which is compulsory to the Khasis on the occasion of an adoption, perhaps we are almost justified in concluding that in former times the adoption custom did not exist, more especially as the Khasis possess a special word, *iap duh*, for describing a family the females of which have all died out; and it is admittedly the custom for the Siem to succeed to the property of such a family. The Synteng custom of *'rnp iing* may have been borrowed from the Hindus, when the Rajas of Jaintia became converts to that religion.

TENURE OF LAND AND LAWS REGARDING LAND.

Land in the Khasi Hills proper, i.e. land in the high plateau, is held somewhat differently from land in the Jaintia Hills and

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invocation. *U klong* is then made over to the judge (the Siem or the Sirdar as the case may be, &c.).

The person who undergoes the above ordeal wins the case, the production of evidence being unnecessary.

WAR.

Although the Khasis, unlike the Nagas, the Garos, the wild Was of Burma, the Dayaks of Borneo, and other head-hunting tribes, cannot be said to have indulged in head-hunting in ancient times, as far as we know, merely for the sake of collecting heads as trophies, there seems to be some reference to a custom of head-hunting in a description of the worship of the god *u Synghai Bámon*, one of the principal gods of war amongst the Khasis. This god is described in one of the folk tales (I have obtained it through the kindness of Dr. Roberts, the Welsh missionary at Cherrapunji) as being the deity who gives the heads of the enemy to the successful warriors. To this god, as well as to *Ka Rám Shandi*, they offer a cock. Before sacrifice the warriors dance round an altar, upon which are placed a plume of cock's feathers (*u thaia*), a sword, a shield, a bow, an arrow, a quiver, *pán* leaves, and flowers. After the cock has been sacrificed, they fix its head on the point of a sword and shout three times. The fixing of the cock's head on the point of a sword is said to have been symbolical of the fixing of the human head of an enemy killed in battle, on the top of the *soh-lang* tree. Mr. Shadwell, of Cherrapunji, whose memory carries him back to the time when the British first occupied the Khasi Hills, has a recollection of a Khasi dance at Cherra, round an altar, upon which the heads of some *Dykhars*, or plains people, killed in a frontier raid had been placed. The Khasis used to sacrifice to a number of other gods also for success in battle. An interesting feature of the ancient combats between the people of different Siemships was the challenge. When the respective armies had arrived at a little distance from one another, they used to stop to hear each other shout the *'tieu-Blei*, or challenge, to the other side. This custom was called *pyrta 'tieu-Blei*, or shouting out the

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The above and other similar sacrifices to the gods of the State or divisions of the State may be said to be the communal religious duties of the *lyngdoh*. The duties of *lyngdoh* with reference to private persons may now be mentioned. When it is found that any two people have made an incestuous marriage, that is to say a marriage within the exogamous group of the *kur*, or clan, the parties at fault are taken before the *lyngdoh* by their clansmen, who request him to sacrifice in order to ward off the injurious effects of the *sneg*, or taboo, of such a connection from the kindolk. On this occasion a pig is sacrificed to *u'lei lyngdoh* and a goat to *ka lei lieng soj*. The parties at fault are then cutcasted. As mentioned in another place, the sin of incest admits of no expiation for the offenders themselves. In the Khyrim State, it is said by the *lyngdoh* themselves, although not by the Siem or the myntries, that they are the reversionary legatees of all the persons who die without leaving female heirs (*sap dak*). In other chiefships such property passes to the Siem. The *lyngdoh* of Nongkrem can also take possession of the property of persons who have been found to harbour an evil spirit (*jiasdoh*) in their houses. It appears that in such cases the house and furniture are burnt, as in the case of the *Tarah* superstition in the Jaintia Hills, the *lyngdoh*, however, taking possession of jewellery or anything else of value. The only practical service the *lyngdoh* renders in return is to build the afflicted person a new house; unless, indeed, we take into account the casting forth of the devil by the *lyngdoh*. Mr. Jenkins, of Shanggung, in the Jaintia Hills, writes: "Such is the belief of the people in the evil spirits, that they are completely under the influence of the priests and spend large sums of money in order to secure their favour. They live in constant dread lest by the least transgression or omission they should offend these avaricious men and so bring upon themselves the wrath of the demons." The influence of the *lyngdoh* over the people in the Jaintia Hills seems to be stronger than in the Khasi Hills. For instance, it came to my notice in Baliang that crops cannot be cut until the *lyngdoh* has seen them, in other words, until the *lyngdoh* has claimed and obtained his share of the produce. In many places, however, in the Khasi Hills the *lyngdoh* is much dis-
[illegible], owing, no doubt, to the influence of Christian education.

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SECTION VI.

MISCELLANEOUS.

TERMINOLOGY.

551 The Khasis, like the Alfoors of Poso in Celebes, seem to be somewhat reluctant to utter the names of their own immediate relations, and of other people's also. Parents are very frequently called the mother of so and so (the child's name being mentioned), or the father of so and so, *cf. Ka kmi ka Wesi, U kpa u Philip*. The actual names of the parents, after falling into desuetude, are often entirely forgotten. The origin of the practice may be that the Khasis, like the Alfoors, were reluctant to mention their parents by name for fear of attracting the notice of evil spirits. The practice of *teknonymy*, however, is not confined to the Khasis or the Alfoors of Celebes (see footnote to page 412 of the "Golden Bough"). The custom is also believed to have been prevalent to some extent not long ago in some parts of Ireland.

777 177 551 The advent of the Welsh Missionaries and the partial dissemination of English education has in some cases produced rather peculiar names. I quote some instances:—

U Water Kingdom, Ka Mediterranean Sea, Ka Red Sea; U Shakewell Bones, U Overland, Ka Brindisi, Ka Medina, Ka Mary Jones, U Mission, and Ka India.

KHASI METHOD OF CALCULATING TIME.

505 The Khasis adopt the lunar month, *u kynai*, twelve of which go to the year *ka snem*. They have no system of reckoning cycles, as is the custom with some of the Shan tribes. The following are the names of the months:—

505 *U Iylla-lyngkot*, corresponding to *January*. This month in 132. the Khasi Hills is the coldest in the year. The Khasis turn

Family Property and Maternal Rights

/127/ by C. Becker S.D.S., Wurzburg

The fall of 1910 and the entire following year found the distin-
114 guished head of the Ethnographic Museum in Munich, to whom this anniversary volume is dedicated, on a research and collection trip in the extensive and inexhaustible territories of India. He was accompanied by his active wife, who served as his scientific assistant. From Burma, a mine of rich, ethnographic treasure and where the greatest part of their Indian stay was spent, their journey led the research couple into Assam, situated in the northeast of India, a country of equal significance. Assam certainly belongs politically to an-
101 terior India, but forms a bridge to interior India both ethnographically and linguistically.

Among the mountain peoples who inhabit the chain of hills which traverses the length of present-day Assam, and which separates the two largest parts of the country from each other, the Brahmaputra Valley in the north and the Surma Plain in the south, is one of the most interesting and doubtless the most advanced of the tribes, the Khasi, who inhabit the so-called Khasi and Jaintia Mountains. It
[91] was in Shillong, the center of this area, which is now the capital of the country Assam under the English government, where towards the end of September, 1911, I first became acquainted with Professor D. L. Scherman and his wife and where a friendship of many years
133 had its beginning. Therefore this little study will lead us to the Khasi Mountains, to its slopes overgrown with its peculiar pine trees, which receive greetings across the plains from the snow-crowned peaks of the Himalayas, which are flooded by the mighty waves of the Brahmaputra River and the alternating inundations of the Surma River. Here a contented and cheerful little people live who have maintained their own special characteristics in spite of the many European influences and those of neighboring cultures.

162 /128/ Of the entire population of 243,263 people, who form the inhabitants of the Khasi and Jaintai Mountains (1), 203,855 are Khasi.

1. The following statistical estimates are taken from the Census of India 1921, Vol. III, Assam, (Shillong, 1923) pp. I and II.

162
197 Of those, 37,852 have adopted Christianity, while the others are still adherents of ancient animistic cults, with the exception of somewhat

more than a thousand of them who have been converted to the Hindu religion.

This group of people possesses the possibility of expansion, since they have at their disposal within the area of the Khasi and Jaintia Mountains a territory of 6,022 English square miles, with only 60 persons per square mile. Although wide areas are not built up and the system of shifting fields prevents the full utilisation of the land, it is still true that with this small population figure by far the largest part of the whole population (200,781) is dependent on agriculture; trade and manufacturing only play a subordinate part.

With regard to the division of the sexes, the two large religions of Assam, Hinduism and Mohammedanism, show the same proportion as in the rest of India, a lesser number of women than men. But among the Khasi the women are more numerous than the men. In the Brahmaputra valley with its greater Hindu population there are only 892 women for every 1,000 men; in the Surma valley, with a greater Moslem element, there are 937. But the situation is reversed among the Khasi, where there is a surplus of 74 women for every thousand men. The position of the women is basically different among this people. It is based on the customs and usages of maternal rights that prevail among them, which are predominantly based on possession and which find honorable expression in possession.

1. Property Rights in the Family Property.-

The great principle which governs property among the Khasi, is that all family property rests in the hands /128: A/ /Fig. 1. Khasi Girls and Women with their Carrying Baskets. Fig. 2. An Old Clan Mother in the Village Laitumkhra. / /128: B/ /Fig. 3. At the Oracle of Egg Throwing/. Fig. 5. Khasi Girls and Men in Festive Dance Clothing. / /128: C/ /Fig. 4. A Group of Syntengs/ /128: D/ Fig. 6. A Holy Grove and Part of the Village Raliang/ /128/ of the women and not of the man. The man can never be the owner of family property, and it can never be transferred to him. He may perhaps acquire some property through his own industry and work, but even that will pass to feminine hands by the path of inheritance. The concept of family is not as narrowly drawn here as in our country. This is a question of the clan-family, the clan. The head of it is always the youngest daughter, who, even when she has become old, bears the honorable name ka barit in the Jaintia Mountains, and in the Khasi Mountains ka khadduh, the last, the youngest. Around her gather her nearest blood relatives, brothers and sisters, and children. For example let

1: Berlin-O M-4,5 (1910-11) 1914 AST Khasi AST

his wife and children.

E. Holy Pieces of Land and Forest

A special kind of land property is still encountered in the Khasi and Jaintia Mountains. These are pieces of land and forests which are considered sang or kyntang, forbidden or holy, thus kyndon sang, khlaw kyntang, forbidden fields, holy forests. They are also named in connection with the name god, for example, khlaw Blei, forest of the gods, which, to a certain extent, might offer the key to their purpose and meaning. The hands of man are not supposed to disturb this kind of property; this property is sacred to the gods and at the most may be used in their service.

It is not easy to trace the origin and beginnings of these reserves. But several solutions may be found in regard to sections of land. When the /136/ Catholic mission station was founded in the village of Nongkrem which is located on a steep mountain slope, it was hard to find a place that was halfway suitable and big enough to build even a small dwelling on it. Finally the missionary discovered such a place somewhat outside the village. But then there was a new difficulty. The place was the cremation area for the dead and therefore was sang /taboo/. The spirits of the dead would punish every intruder severely. The people were finally persuaded to burn their dead somewhere else, but it was more difficult to find any who were ready to help with the work of the building. Even those whom the missionary finally persuaded to help still suffered heavily from the fear of the punishment of the gods and continuously one or the other of them had imaginary illnesses.

In the case of more extensive pieces of land, the male worshippers (thlen), who carry on their dreadful activities in the Khasi Mountains, (8) may offer an explanation sometimes. If such a person is

8. Le Mouvement des Brahmapoutre, /In the River Valley of the Brahmaputra/, pp. 188f.

convicted of murder, which he has committed in the service of the snake god in order to sacrifice the blood of the slain person to him, and if he wishes to free himself from the conviction, he can do nothing other than sell all his movable and immovable property. The latter thus becomes sang. Nobody would dare to take over the fields and gardens, to plant anything there, or to touch any fruit on that property. Thus in Cherrapunji a native Catholic was able to take

923 possession of a couple of orange gardens which a Shim worshipper
799 had abandoned, as the former did not believe in ghosts. (9)

9. Ibid., p. 82.

923 In the case of all these pieces of ground which are considered
799 sang, the fear of the severe punishment of the gods prevents each
799 owner from building. If another builds, he does not stop him, be-
797 cause he leaves him to the revenge of the insulted god. As may be
seen from the case mentioned, the /137/ heathen are at a disadvan-
tage in respect to their companions who have turned to Christianity.
The latter no longer feel tied to the heathen laws, at least as far
as religion is involved and no longer share their fears in many things.
Impoverished Khasi Christians thus find an opportunity to acquire
land in cases when it would not be possible for a Khasi who is still
held captive by animistic beliefs.

But among the latter there are also disgraceful exceptions. In
Nongkah, a larger village of the Jaintia Mountains with perhaps 400
huts -- therefore the name, which means large village -- several
years ago a heathen observed with a jealous eye how so many pieces
of the fallow fields of the gods were changed into fertile lands under
the hands of the Christians. The wish grew in him to do likewise.
Although he no longer had much fear of his gods, he still had to
reckon with the anger and revenge of the members of his clan, if he
as a heathen dared to take such a step. They were not likely to dare
to do anything against Christians. Without further ado he became
converted to the Methodist religion and appeared before the English
government official in Jowai, the capital of the Jaintia Mountains,
for the transfer of a suitable piece of land. After the revolt of the
Syiems in the year 1860, the English government pronounced the
whole territory of the Jaintia Mountains to be government land. They
also claim the right of renewal of all free-lying land, usually by a
lease of many years. Since the government receives rent for the
land, it is to its interest when applicants appear. In this case the
deed of conveyance was issued and over the years a flourishing rice
field was made from the land that had been useless up to now. Now
that the matter was one of his affairs, he turned his back on the
Methodists in order to become a heathen again and to participate in
the heathen sacrifices. But then he got into trouble. The heathen
were incensed at such a game and brought serious charges before the
English government official. He ruled that in the future no piece
of ground of that type /138/ should be leased except upon

presentation of the written statement of the chieftain and the village elders that they would have no objection to it. The avaricious renter of the divine land mentioned above was despised by all.

As concerns the holy forests, which often extend picturesquely from the highest peak down the slope and are overgrown with gnarled oaks and bright colored rhododendron, no tree may be felled there; at the most, fallen wood or wood torn down by a storm or already rotten wood may be taken. The spirits of the forest, as punishing gods, will revenge every offense. Tigers and leopards, apes, bears, and snakes enjoy an undisturbed existence here. The only case in which wood may be cut in these divine woods is for the religious cremation ceremonies of the dead. It is the custom of the Khasi to set fire often to great areas in order to fertilize the ground with the ashes of grasses, trees, and shrubs without regard for the new growth of trees, and to make potato fields there for a year or two or to grow mountain rice, millet, or something similar and then to leave the field fallow again. Thus this is a clever precautionary rule, since there might otherwise be cases when there might be no wood for cremating the dead.

(Continuation follows)

/304/ *Family Property and Maternal Rights*
by C. Becker S.D.S., Wiesbaden

Gurdon says, (10) that these holy groves were formerly the property

10. The Khasis, p. 87.

of a village. That is not always so as the following case will demonstrate. I am also relating this because it grants us a deeper look into the whole customs of the clan under discussion.

Several decades ago, a Khasi who had become a Protestant, U Jainsh Shai by name, was installed as a clerk with the English government official in Jowai. In order to assure his family a better living than just his meagre salary, he yearned for land. By birth from Jongshnit in the War territory, he remembered that he could obtain his still in the neighboring village Syndai from the family clan Umlilang. So one day he went thither. After the customary greetings, and refreshment with a water pipe and betel nut and conversation about various indifferent matters, he mentioned his desire. "I know," he said in the polite language of ever these simple natural men, "I know the goodness and the good name of your clan 'Nartiew' and the elders

778 423 63 787

of your clan; you are glad to come to the help of others everywhere and thereby have prepared honor and fame for your whole clan /Sippe/, for your clan gods and goddesses, and for your ancestors of both sexes. You are blessed with grandchildren and great grandchildren. I rejoice in your good fortune and I wish that the gods and goddesses of your clan /Stamm/ will be favorably inclined for all times. Therefore I dare to come to you and to make a request of you: I have only one request: nga don tang kawei ka jingkyrpadi Namely, I need a piece of land, so that I can give my grandsons and granddaughters something to eat. My own field does not suffice for so many mouths. I have noticed that a piece of forest lies here /301/ unused. I have inquired to whom it belongs and the village elders said to me that it was the property of the famous family clan Umlang. I honor you, therefore, and beg you: can I receive this forest according to the law and custom of the clan?"

Questions from the clan mother and the family elders followed this speech. Finally it was clear to them what piece was meant. "That is the khlaw sang, the forest of the gods," they cried. "Certainly that belongs to our clan property, but as you yourself know, we can neither rent nor sell it. We cannot and do not even dare say, cultivate the land. But we also cannot prevent you from doing it or forbid you. That piece of land is presented to the gods; they will revenge themselves on anyone who removes it from their cult; they themselves will guard over it so that no one will seize it."

This answer satisfied U Shai completely. He had no fear of the punishment of the forest gods; he had just wanted to make certain whether the family clan would put difficulties in his way or would even bring complaints before the English government. The forest was soon arable. Fire transformed the wood and the bushes, the high grasses and the vines into ashes; oranges and lemons, pineapples, and bananas were planted and after a few years the land brought in from the sale of the fruit a sum, considerable for those conditions, of 800 to 1,000 rupienmarks a year.

The family clan Umlang was still faithful to their native faith. As the other heathen did, so they observed the undertaking of U Shai with fear and anxiety. They believed the gods must bestir themselves and the forest would devour the miscreant with his family. That did not occur. It could not be avoided that in this way the belief in their gods and native customs received a jolt among the heathen and many of them went over to the viewpoint that they might also do it.

After a while a young Khasi with such advanced views married /30b/ into the family clan Umliang. Meanwhile 40 years had passed. The old father U Shai was already dead. The piece of land planted by him, as it was not actually family property, according to the special customs of the War had passed on not only to the youngest daughter but also to his son Jacob U Shai and his sisters. On their side they had helped their father in the clearing of the forest. The siblings were Catholic. The young man mentioned above brought a legal complaint against the siblings before the English government official in Cherrapunji a few years ago: the forest made arable by Jacob U Shai and transformed into a fruit orchard had been illegally acquired and is the property of the clan of his wife; he demanded a piece of the land back for the family Umliang and for the other piece a corresponding annual rent must be paid.

In reply the siblings Shai could claim that the affair was past the legal time limit. According to tribal custom the time limit on small matters was 10 years, for greater matters 30 years. In addition the main point on their side was that the piece of land in question was khlaw kyntang, forest of the gods, and the family Umliang could not ask anything for it. For this the Shai siblings lacked witnesses, whereas the Umliangs produced several heathen witnesses for the simple declaration of the right of possession. The case was long drawn out. It was finally decided against the Shai siblings and they were declared deprived of the property. The missionary P. Benedikt Nober now concerned himself with the affair. He brought more than 100 witnesses, all clan mothers or village elders, who were ready to swear that that piece of land was a forest of the gods as long as man could remember. The English judge, whom he informed of this, decided that this was a basis for proposing a revision and change of the judgment, but the Shai siblings had lost all their money in the previous trial to pettifogging lawyers and did not have the spirit to begin again. With oriental equanimity they accepted the loss and thus the affair remained.

/30b/ The case is instructive anyway, insofar as it shows that the so-called holy forests are also found in the possession of individual family clans; how they are valued by them as long as they remain faithful to their animistic views and how they are able to make their right of possession to them valid even after years.

3. Customs Concerning the Right of Inheritance

When the clan mother dies, the youngest daughter always receives the inheritance among the Khasi. If for any reason the youngest daughter cannot take possession, her next youngest sister follows. If there are

returns to the hands of the women. 428

The following example may explain the customs involved here and further sift them out even though it scarcely throws a pleasant light on the dissensions which have been introduced among the Khasi people as a result of the divisions of the various Christian religions which are striving for their conversion.

In the village Kyndongtupér, a man had gradually acquired some property for himself with 15 oxen and cows, /305/ a decent hut and furnishings and 3 beautiful rice fields, large enough to sustain a family clan. After his death the youngest daughter of his sister, named Ka Pliang Shai Syndūr, was considered the valid heiress. She was still under age and her mother was already dead. As a result a sister of this mother, named Ka Pliang Shai (11)took over the management 428 797 613

11. Pan and Syndur are Khasi names; Pliang Shai is the name of the family, clan; literal meaning: shining plate.

of the inheritance and lived with the little heiress in the clan hut. There was no doubt that the latter would receive the entire property after she reached her majority. After a while, a young Catholic, U Salomon Tarah, wooed for Syndūr's hand. Thereupon the older siblings, a brother and a sister, both of whom belonged to the Methodist Church, became enraged. In spite of all the hostility, the young girl stuck to her decision, married Tarah and became Catholic. The young married couple had to flee from the clan hut because of the anger of the siblings. The latter sought to have the sister disinherited, but the other relatives involved would have nothing to do with this. They were so carried away by their anger that they did what was considered a crime even in the eyes of the heathen: they drove the cattle away secretly and sold it; likewise they cleared out the clan hut and even sold two rice fields. On complaint to the competent court, Syndūr was finally granted her right: she could take over the clan hut and the family property which was meanwhile greatly diminished. 428 797 671 613

Although the Khasi who have been converted to Christianity do not need to be bound by the laws of succession in inheritance and although this is often recognized by the heathen Khasi, there is no hindrance put in their way by the Catholic Church to following their native tribal customs in this matter. The Catholic Khasi themselves do not wish to deviate from them: /306/ a dogged attachment to ancient customs and a respect for them are in their blood. Here are a few examples.

In Mawphu the Catholic clan mother Ka Johanna Sumah, wife of U Andreas Tuber, died without leaving any female descendants. It would

428 797 671 613 have been understood if the only son U Johannes Sunah, according to the ruling custom of Christians elsewhere, had claimed the considerable inheritance of rice fields, forest, and huts. A serious objection would not have been expected either from the officials or the relatives. Johannes was also spoken to about it in this fashion, but in vain. He could not conquer the inner revulsion of acting against ancient tribal customs for a temporal advantage. His simple answer was: "If I am a good Catholic, God will bless me in other ways without my going against our ancient customs." And so matters stood. The whole property went to the youngest daughter of the sister of the deceased; this branch of the family was still heathen. Through industry and economy Johannes finally acquired his own household with a goodly piece of land.

The Catholic Khasi even get rid of possessions readily which they already possess if the tribal customs demand it. It happened unfortunately several years ago that both the wife of the chief teacher of the Catholic Khasi public school in Shillong, U Thomas Byllun, as well as the wife of the cook of the mission station there, U Sebastian Shiah, were both carried away by death within a short time. Both men had acquired very nice property by their industry. According to Khasi law they had no further claims on their children who were still quite small. They belonged to the clan of their deceased wives and had to be taken by them and raised. According to Khasi law, the property that they had acquired also passed to the youngest daughter. Willingly each of them handed over the children and the interim management of the property to the relatives of the deceased wives, took the few clothes and purely personal possessions /307/ with them and sought to begin again from the beginning in the rented half of a hut. To my question, whether that had been hard for them, they answered with quiet matter-of-factness: "But that is the custom among us Khasi."

It is not necessary to emphasize especially that such respect for the tribal customs has made only a favorable impression on the Khasi who are still heathen.

Gurdon relates (12) that the clan mother loses her position in the

12. The Khasis, p. 83.

family when she changes her religion, for example at her conversion to Christianity, and that the youngest daughter takes her place. The justification for this lies in the fact that she then no longer belongs to the religion and cannot offer the customary family sacrifices.

Because of her whole position as guardian of the inherited religion and customs, it is not frequent that such a woman breaks with the ancestor cult. If this does happen, it does not necessarily mean that she loses the entire property. That depends really on the position the other members of the family take. If they are all still firm heathens, who wish to have nothing to do with Christianity, they can force the clan mother to give everything up. The high respect for her is frequently so great, however, that either the whole clan or at least a part of it decides to take the same step and change religions with the clan mother. The part that remains heathen will certainly propose a division of the family property. This is also possible in other cases. 429 613 797 671

4. Division of the Family Property.

Although it is rare, the weal and woe of a family-clan can require that a family-clan be split into two clans /Clan/ and that a division of the common property be undertaken. The basis for this is if the family /Geschlecht/ becomes too big, if the elders in the family council /308/ are no longer united and hate and revenge threaten to destroy, if a part of the clan /Clan/ tries to seize the better fields by violence and refuses to deliver the harvest for the common need, if one branch has brought the whole clan /Sippe/ dishonor and shame by false oaths, incest, revenge, treachery or some other severe crime. Only the guilty party will be excluded from the clan /Clan/ in such cases, if he remains stubborn and impenitent. But if he begs for forgiveness with his lips and participates in the expiatory sacrifice, forgiveness will not be refused him. But a certain inner tension and bad feeling often remain behind. 613 578 688

At the conversion to another religion, it often depends on how the clan mother and also the family elders are inclined towards the religion in question, and also on who is changing religions. If it is only brothers, sons, nephews, or grandsons, of the clan mother, a division is out of the question, since the men are not capable of inheriting. But if it is the youngest or next youngest daughter or even the sister of the clan mother, then a division of property can be undertaken. A clan mother after all is so attached to her child or her nearest blood relatives that she would not like to push them entirely away from herself unless she were completely set against the religion in question and angered. If that should be so in individual cases, the heiress concerned will still consider, whether it is not more advisable to wait to change her religion until the clan mother has closed her eyes and she then has free play. Then that which was mentioned at the conclusion of the previous section can occur. 797 428 425 613

425 613 If after discussions lasting weeks all the problems involved have been settled, the agreements decided on are finally completed with the customary ceremonial. It was mentioned above, what objects [178] for the religious cult are to be found in the hut of the clan mother. The little basket plaited of bamboo cane, which is considered the special seat of the divine ancestors of the clan. /Clan/ is not divided. /309/ Another, similar basket is made. By sacrifice of goats and pigs, these divinities are then entreated so that a part of them may take up their dwelling in this basket for the protection of the newly constructed clan. If the sacrificial priest can announce the agreement of the deceased spirits with the division from the oracle of the entrails of the animals and by egg throwing, then this basket is brought to the new clan hut. On another day one of the two hazelnut poles is then taken for the new hut with further sacrifices. Each of the two separated parties must fetch a new pole to go with the other one. In a like way the existent sacrificial utensils, such as rice baskets, mats, and gourd bottles are divided. With this ceremony the agreements made about the division of the other property are considered legally existent. Each party now goes his own way independent of the other. Certain relationships of [582] friendship and kinship still remain in existence; however, the bar to marriage, which otherwise would make impossible the marriage between members of the same family clan without regard to the degree of relationship, is no longer in existence.

425 797 796 If, at the conversion of one part of the members of the clan to the Christian religion, the division of property can be accomplished legally, it is better to insist on it. The members who have become Christian are more readily protected from disadvantageous treatment. Even if they should take part of the fields for themselves in separate management, the part of the clan that remained heathen could demand this back years later. Enmity, hate, and revenge would then follow. Without the formal ceremony combined with the sacrifices mentioned a Khasi does not recognize a division as legal. Since Christians cannot participate in such a sacrificial ceremony, there is nothing to do other than to have this ceremony undertaken while those seeking to be baptized are still catechumens. Before they are accepted then into the church by baptism, the heathen cult objects that were brought into the clan hut must be removed. "To /310/ this most important ceremony, "the missionary of the Synteng territory, P. Benedikt Neher S. D. S., once related, "I usually went myself if it was possible for me to or sent a European sister of the Order. Thereby the ceremony acquired a great deal

[See category 116, pp 4,5. — Analyst]

more solemnity and had a powerful effect on the heathen and the catechumens. The basket of the gods, the two sticks, the gourd bottles, and the other objects of the cult were carried to an open place in front of the hut, placed on a pile of bamboo canes and wood and then lighted by fire. The heathen stood at a respectful distance, fearful and trembling, and expecting that the gods would revenge themselves and destroy me with fire from heaven. But nothing of the kind happened, and disappointed and thoughtful they went back to their huts. The clan hut would then be blessed and sprinkled with holy water."

425 797 796

In general the Christian religions strive to settle their members in a village separated from the heathen clan members, and to settle them in such a way that the separate family clans remain together when possible. The christian customs, that husband, wife, and children then live together in one family is carried out when possible but, however it is not always done without difficulties in view of the traditional customs.

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8: Gurdon G-3 (no date) 1904 AR7 Khasi AR7

—the *Shyngkup*, or porch, being flush with the ground. The *nengpei*, or centre room, is approached by a flight of steps. There are no windows, except one, which is bored on one side to admit light and air,—this is called the *pongshai*. Both Khasis and Syntengs, like other Indo-Chinese races, are much addicted to gambling, and drinking to excess is a national vice. Christianity has, through the agency of the Welsh Calvinistic Mission, gained a very striking extension, and may be said indeed to be leavening the whole nation. Schools are numerous, and are pretty well attended by girls as well as boys. The Christians, and those who have come under the influence of Christianity, have adopted a high standard of comfort, and their houses resemble English cottages more nearly than the huts with which one is familiar in India.

Agriculture.—The Khasis do not use the plough; they cultivate their fields with a peculiar-shaped hoe, or *mohkhiew*. They cultivate rice in the valleys, the rice being sown broadcast and the fields irrigated often after considerable labour. They also cultivate hill rice on the uplands, which they sow broadcast. The potato, which was introduced into the Khasi Hills by Mr. David Scott about the year 1830,[1] is extensively cultivated and forms one of the principal articles of export. Job's-tears (*Coix lachryma*), several kinds of millet, Indian-corn, the *Sohphlang* (*Flemingia vestita*), are also largely cultivated. The valleys on the southern slopes of the hills have extensive orange groves, the oranges, especially those grown in the neighbourhood of Shella, being famous for their quality. The betel, vine, and areca nut are also largely grown on the southern side of the hills and in the low valleys, these plantations being irrigated by elaborate systems of aqueducts. The leaf of the bay tree (*Tatyrpad*) is collected, and is exported to the Sylhet plains. The Syntengs differ from the Khasis, in that they make use of the plough. Both Khasis and Syntengs are industrious cultivators, and they possess a certain rough and ready knowledge of the uses of manure. A more detailed description of agriculture in these hills will be given in the monograph.

[1] Khasi and Jaintia Hills Administration Report for 1875-76 by Colonel Bivar.

2. *Matriarchal customs and law of inheritance of property.*—The mother is the head of the house, and is both owner and the custodian of the family property as long as she lives. Males can own no property amongst either Khasis or Syntengs except self-acquired property. On the death of the mother, in the case of the Khasis, the family property passes to the youngest daughter. According to some authorities, however, the property would in practice be divided amongst all the surviving daughters. Failing daughters, the property passes to the youngest niece, and failing a niece, to the youngest female cousin. The same

U Iaiong,—the cloudy changeable-weather moon, corresponding with April. 805

U Jim-mang,—the flowering moon, corresponding with May.

U Jil-lu,—the deep-water moon, corresponding with June.

U Naitung,—the bad-smelling moon, corresponding with July.

N Nailar,—the moon when a plant called the *Jatalar*, which has a red flower flourishes. This is perhaps one of the *arums*. The plant is commonly known as the snake plant.

U Nailur,—the moon for ploughing, corresponding with September. This may be also the month for courting, the word *lur* also having the meaning to woo.

U Ry-saw,—the moon when nature fades (usually becomes red) corresponding with October.

U Naiwing,—the earthen-pot moon, corresponding with November.

U Nohprah,—the moon of the fall of the leaf, corresponding with December.

The Khasi week consists generally of eight days, although in some of the *War* villages on the southern side of the hills there is a week of four days only. The days of the week are named after the markets which are held in rotation on the different days.

Khasi.	*Synteng.*
1. Lynkah.	Ky-llao.
2. Nongkrem.	Pyn-sing.
3. Um-long.	Mao-long.
4. Rang-hep.	'lao-siang.
5. Shillong.	Maoshai.
6. Pomtih.	Pynkat.
7. Um-nih.	Thym-blein.
8. Yeo-duh.	Ka-hat.

16. *Teknonomy*.—One more interesting custom that may be noticed is the Khasi and Synteng custom of *teknonomy*, or of parents taking the names of their children, *e.g.*, ka Kmi Ka Nari (the mother of Ka Nari), U Kpa Nihon (the father of Nihon). The taking of names thus is almost universally practised. The actual names of the parents after falling into desuetude are often completely forgotten by the villagers. Only the names of the children are used coupled with "father of" "mother of" as explained above. The advent of the Welsh Missionaries and the partial dissemination of English education has, in some cases, produced some rather peculiar names. I quote some instances:—U Water Kingdom, Ka Mediterranean Sea, Ka Red Sea, U Shakewell Bones, U Overland, Ka Brindisi. 551 [197]

Ik Chattopadhyay E-4, 5 (no date) 1941 AR7 Khasi AR7

Khar Dumpep. These three clans—Khar Dohling, Khar Dumpep and Khar Sohnoh cannot intermarry on account of their common ancestry. U Alisson, the sister's husband of U Subu Rai is of Khar Dumpep clan and furnished me with the above details. He stated that his ancestress married a man of the old settler clans of Mawphlang and came to her husband's village. This man, being of the Khadar Kur, could build a house and cultivate land from the community holding. The property thus acquired passed to the daughters; and gradually the clan Khar Dumpep grew more numerous, and acquired rights in the Ri Raid like an old clan. [Genealogy I(*c*)].

(*d*) The family of the first wife of U Orongsing furnishes another illustration. The woman Ka Li came with her widowed mother from Cherra. The father had been a Synteng from Jowai. The girl has been married by U Ibchon, who is a member of one of the old settler clans. He has built a house for his family and made an excellent potato garden out of the common land for the maintenance of his wife and children. They will inherit it from him according to the usual Khasi mode. [Genealogy II(*c*)].

(*e*) U Roberts who is a Synteng of Jowai, and a Christian by religion (Genealogy V) came to Mawphlang in 1930-31 and after a couple of years married a non-Christian Khasi girl by Khasi rites thereby losing his membership of the church. He cultivated Ri Raid land when he stayed with his wife's mother Ka Shami [Genealogy V]. This woman is of Khar Sohno clan. One of her ancestresses, came to Mawphlang only a few generations ago, and married a man of the old clans. Her descendants have thereby obtained the privilege of cultivating Ri Raid. U Roberts has divorced his wife and no longer possesses this right. He now works as a tailor in the village, and lives with a friend near the bazaar.

(*f*) Gurdon has suggested that the large number of clans having Khar as the first part of the name of the Kur have originated from ancestresses who were carried off from the plains.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

4. The Bhoi — occupy the northern slopes of the Khasi Hills, covered with thick semi-tropical forests; they practise jhum cultivation. 619

5. The Lynngam — inhabit the western border of the Khasi Hills, near the Garo Hills. They are said to be half-Khasi and half-Garo. Their economy is similar to that of the Bhoi.

These ecological and geographical differences correspond also to politico-historical differences. From the 16th century to 1835, eve of the annexation of the Jaintia Hills to the Khasi Hills under the British administration, the people of the Jaintia Hills formed part of the Hindu Jaintia kingdom, whose capital was Jaintiapur, on the border of the present East Pakistan and of the Jaintia Hills. The capital, at one time, was moved to Nortiang near Jowai in the heart of the Jaintia Hills. The Jaintia Hills were administrated by twelve governors. Such a highly developed economic system as based on wet rice cultivation, must have helped a great deal in forming a kingdom adjoining the plain. Through the common economy and political organization with the Hindus of the plain, the Hindu civilization of the Bengal plain penetrated deeply among the Jaintias, who are matrilineal hill dwellers. 175 648

On the other hand, the Khasi Hills have remained outside the histories of either Assam or Bengal. They were governed by a number of petty native chiefs: there were twenty-five chiefs ruling the Khasi Hills when the British colonial administration was established there. Most of these chiefs belonged to the Siem clan. The history of the Khasi Hills had been shrouded in darkness till the beginning of the 19th century, except for fragmentary stories such as Khasi raids on the Sylhet people.

The development of the upland Khasi Hills started with the establishment of its headquarters at Shillong in 1874. Since then the features of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills have changed a great deal. What was once a small Khasi hamlet, untouched by the light of history, has become nowadays a busy modern town where many Khasi intellectuals live, mixing with various outsiders who are engaged in official work or in business. The British administration opened the way to missionary activities, especially that of the Welsh Calvinist Methodists who set up a mission in the Hills in 1841, almost at the same time as British political influence began to make itself felt in the Khasi Hills. Along with the political penetration from Cherrapunjee (1833) to Shillong, missionaries established many institutions, including churches, schools and hospitals, etc. Christian education, bringing with it the promise of clerical positions, attracted young Khasi a great deal; and the majority of the upland Khasi have been converted to Christianity. They have become the modern intellectuals of their people. 178 648 797 • [871] [743]

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

Thus, the marriage of a non-heiress and a man of authority also produces an unstable position for the husband in spite of his having an independent household. Therefore, the possibility of a really stable marriage is even more limited; it will occur only in the match of a non-heiress and a non-authority of the *iing*. But even these marriages cannot be free from the influence of a matrilineal social structure: the man of authority of the wife's *iing* may visit these couples now and then, curb the husband's power and remind both partners of the orientation towards the matri-kin, the *iing*, though this pressure is insignificant in comparison with that experienced by the heiress's family. Likewise, a husband now and then visits his youngest sister's house, *ka iing sen*. These constant matrilineal contacts offer husbands chances of escaping from even the slightest matrimonial tension. Whenever a Khasi man feels uneasiness, he will return to his sister's house rather than face a difficult situation with his wife. This tendency is maximised especially on the occasion of religious ceremonies, when all individuals are grouped around each *iing*.

It is apparent that the rules of the *iing* as the underlying structural pattern, function throughout the various categories of domestic unit of the Khasi community as the most important intrinsic force.

VII. Polygyny

After this long attempt at the structural analysis of marriages, I think one can theoretically predict what is the situation of polygyny among the Khasi. The theoretical framework elaborated through preceding discussions can also be tested by the empirical data in terms of polygyny.

Nowadays, the Khasi feel so strongly against polygyny that they have no knowledge even that they ever practised it. Many Khasi, in more sophisticated areas, did not believe my findings on polygyny in Sohkynduh and Kongton. I think this is due to the rapid Christianization of the Hills during the last hundred years. My interpreter, though he was not Christian, said to me in the village, "it is most regrettable to bring you to a village where we find polygyny." However, one of the ministers of the Cherra State to which the two villages belong, told me that there was no particular opposition to polygyny, though recent Christian influence gave people the idea that it was a shameful custom, and he mentioned the case of a polygynist in his area, a man who had recently died who had had ten wives. In Jatinga whose inhabitants are all Christian, and in Shella where there has been much contact with, and influence by, Hindus, there were

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

177 people remained non-Hindu in their basic beliefs and social customs. Hindu
648 influences are nevertheless predominant in their culture, especially in their way
771 of living which shows a practical adaptability, somewhat similar to the Japanese
795 acceptance of modern western culture without becoming Christian. In my
census of Shella village, the people calling themselves 'Hindu' amount to 40 per
• [797] cent of the total, but they are the recent converts to the Ramakrishna School
[162] which established a missionary station at Shella after the Partition. The
Christians constitute 30 per cent of the total, most of them having been con-
verted during the last ten years, as in the case of the Ramachrishna School.[1]
[458] The rest remain as they were, of Khasi belief. These conversions to either
Ramachrishna or Christianity seem to have been encouraged by the unstable
situation of the people resulting from the recent economic depression in this area.

439 The Partition of India and Pakistan in August 1947, which drew the bor-
458 derline a few miles south of Shella village, considerably upset village economy
by stopping all trade with Bengal, though a limited amount of trade is allowed
648 with local people at the border. Because of this political change, all the produce
of Shella gardens is rotting away for lack of markets, while all of the rice fields
were taken by Pakistan. Goods now come to Shella only from the uplands,
carried upon men's shoulders over the most difficult pass, which makes every-
thing very expensive. Many families have sold their gold and other treasures,
and some families are facing starvation.[2]

182 Concerning the conversion to a new religion, an interesting phenomenon
171 is to be observed. The conversion to Christianity or to Ramakrishna is mostly
592 by individual: I found in my census that the wife and husband often belong to
613 different religions. This is a very different picture from the Garo, among whom
771 I always found that the husband and wife belonged to the same religion: the
795 conversion of the husband to Christianity was always followed by that of the
wife. I think this reflects the structural differences which influence the actual
relationship between the husband and wife. Among these Khasi, instead of
the husband and wife, the maternal uncle and his nephews and nieces are mostly
of the same religion. The function of the *ring*, the most important social and
religious unit, thus appears also in the conversion to a new religion, stronger
than that of a domestic unit.

Intermarriage

648 The close economic and cultural contact of the Shella people and the Bengalee
771 is not matched by social contact. The essential barrier between the two peoples
is the difference of religion which dominates the entire social order in each
563 society. Though these Khasi were important traders, richer than the neigh-
bouring Hindu peasants, they were considered by the Hindu as outcasts with
whom they never shared social activities. Intermarriages were therefore very
rare. In Shella village, only two exceptional cases were found in my census:

1. A Khasi woman married to a Gurka (cattle-keeper); they live at Shella Bazaar (Sholap).
2. A Khasi woman has marital relation with a Bengalee medical doctor who has resided at Dieng in Shella for six years. He already has a Bengalee

1. These two entirely different missionary activities are competing with each other, and are somewhat related to the political powers within this area.
2. The state government is doing its best to provide them with additional facilities: for example, providing air transport for the transportation of oranges from Shella to Gauhati and Calcutta. However, such arrangements cannot cover the great economic loss suffered by the Shella people.

thereafter, the British negotiated treaties with all the Khasi states, the last treaty being signed in 1862. It was contracted that the chiefs would be subject to the authority of a resident political agent, whose duties would involve maintaining law and order, judging cases of heinous crimes, approving the popular selection of any new chief, and exercising control over certain categories of natural resources. Khasis were guaranteed noninterference in their customary way of life, and they were not then, nor are they now, taxed. Most Khasis, as opposed to Jaintias, were never an integral part of British India, but they did undergo social change as a result of British presence. To enumerate Mills (n.d.): (1) The British introduced the potato, which the Khasis rapidly took up as a cash crop for marketing as far as Calcutta. The intensive specialization exhausted the soil and made for overpowerful crops. (2) Christian missionaries made large numbers of converts, and there arose the difficult questions of whether a Christian should inherit property that traditionally was earmarked for the performance of non-Christian religious rituals. (3) About 1864 the British transferred their headquarters from Cherrapunji to Shillong. When they made Shillong the capital of the entire state of Assam, non-Khasis flocked to it, land values soared, and the concept of private property became increasingly important. Khasis began to marry with members of other ethnic groups, which introduced confusion into traditional social patterns. These problems were exacerbated during World War II, when Shillong and its environs enjoyed enormous economic prosperity. One notable aftermath of this affluence has been the accelerated enrollments in schools and colleges. Hundreds of Khasis now have the B.A., M.A., and even the Ph.D. degree. • With the independence of India in 1947, and under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India (which was drafted by a Khasi), the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District became a Part B, or Autonomous, Tribal Area, to be governed by a District Council composed largely of Khasis and Jaintias, and responsible not to the Legislature of Assam, but to the Governor of Assam as agent of the President of India. The native-state system and the chiefs still exist, and the District Council finds it difficult to effect legislation which is neither offensive to ingrained customs nor a simple blueprint of ill-fitting all-India legislation. The major political schism of the time is between Jaintias, who are accustomed to centralized authority and taxation, and Khasis, who resist the notion of taxation to support the work of a central District Council. [Cf. Gait 1906, Ait-Ahmed 1955, Bhuyan 1949, Morris 1966.]

SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND HOUSING. Settlement patterns. Khasis live ordinarily in nuclear, unclustered, and unplanned villages which are situated just below hill summits to avoid strong winds but still be defensible, and which usually include a de-

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16: McCormack E-4,5 (1956-1958) 1966
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[P 110B]

another. In other words, a state is not a fixed territorial entity. In the early twentieth century, the most populous of the 25 chiefdoms, Khyrim, contained 30,925 persons occupying 7,000 houses in 372 villages, and the least populous, Nongkrem, contained 746 persons occupying 53 houses in 3 villages. Fifteen of the chiefdoms were headed by a *sqaw* (chief), three by a *lyngdoh* (priest), six by a *siehm*, and one by a *sahsniaw*. These leaders all had executive and judicial functions, but a chief's authority was limited in that he had to obtain the approval of his executive council before acting. The other leaders were subject to a similar limitation. A chief maintained a small police force. His major sources of revenue were market tolls, fines, and, more recently, income from licenses to distill raw whisky. Succession to a ruling role in the larger states traditionally involved election by members of a lineage that had a hereditary right to elect, from among members of a lineage that had the hereditary right to rule. In British times, the elective basis was broadened, differentially in the various states, even to the point of popular elections. [Cf. Arnhem 1951, Lyngdoh 1961.] Social stratification. The three classes of lineage are the nobles, the commoners, and the slaves or servants. This stratification applies only to the recruitment to office in the native-state system, for there is no hypergamy, and in a village assembly everyone has equal votes. The noble lineages have the hereditary right to fill from among their male members roles such as village or state priest, councilor to a chief, or elector of a chief. The few lineages which today are remembered as slave or servant lineages had the inherited obligation to render special services to a chief's household. There is an Khasi term for 'commoners.' Every lineage other than a noble or a slave lineage is a commoner lineage, and the commoner lineages are in the majority. Warfare. Warfare was suppressed by the British, and little is known for certain about its traditional forms. The tactics which confronted the British were the ambush and the guerrilla raid. Traditional goals included taking heads from other Khasis and capturing women from the valleys.

RELIGION. Major and indigenous religions. A Welsh Calvinistic Methodist missionary penetrated into Cherrapunji in 1832, and the work that he began continues to this day. His society, which has since become the Welsh Presbyterian Foreign Mission, introduced writing, village primary schools, a high school, a theological seminary, and a hospital. Competing missionaries followed, and by 1854 some thirty Khasis were meeting over the heads not only of traditional Khasiness and Khasi but also of the Buddhists, Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, and Theosophy [Roy 1914]. By the 1890s conversions of the Church of God and the Seventh Day Adventists were

16: McCormack E-4, 9 (1956-1958) 1964

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also active, and in that decade one U Kyrbai, a Khasi convert to Presbyterianism, left that church and founded a unique sect that blends something of himself with something of mystical Hinduism and Christianity. The competition who most seriously threatened the dominance of the Welsh Presbyterians were the Roman Catholic missionaries who arrived in Shillong about 1890. Catholics have since opened a number of high schools, colleges, convents, and orphanages. They also established a technical school, and are now constructing a seminary. At the present time, one estimate is that there are about 100,000 Presbyterians and 50,000 Roman Catholics among Khasis. Members of other Christian sects are comparatively few; adherents to Hinduism and Islam are fewer still, comprised chiefly of Khasi women married to Hindu or Muslim men. U Kyrbai's sect is dying out, and the balance of Khasis are, according to their own terms, "Khasi" in religion. [Cf. Lyngdoh 1957, Morris 1910, Rapmay 1960, Singh 1966, Pugh 1951.] Supernaturals. The great deities are two, an unnamed masculine God (U Blei) and an unnamed feminine Goddess (Ka Blei Nongsynshar Nongkshaw). God created the earth, and in the beginning instructed man in cultivation techniques and also laid down the framework of a moral order that should guide his every move if he wished to join God in heaven after death. This framework was then filled in by the first ancestors, who are therefore the authorities on the subject and are considered as Ka lawbei (the mothers), U Thawlang (the father), and U Suitbin (the mother's brother). Very early, Goddess undertook to keep account of the numbers of human beings on earth, and this role was so important, relating as it did to the health and the multiplication of the people, that she became of major importance in the Khasi pantheon. When no least human society, God activated automatic punishments in the form of natural calamities, and man finally decided that some animal should go and intercede with God on behalf of humans. The cock went, agreed to take upon himself the burden of human sin, and received instruction in the correct divinatory and sacrificial techniques by which he would be one of the main objects of the latter. Again, over a period of time, it was the ancestors who performed these techniques. Now, God is regarded as powerful and merciful, but passive. His punishments have their own impetus, and the expression of his mercy is exhibited in ritual. Goddess is more vaguely conceived, but is much closer to the individual. [But cf. Ehrenfels 1950, who considers of one double-sexed, great deity among Khasis.] Regarding ancestors, it is never clear from prayers whether supplication is to generalized ancestors or to particular first ancestors of a Khasi's own matrilineage, and such a distinction seems not to matter. There are three other categories of minor deities: those who protect places (such as villages, groves, or springs),

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20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1897 AR7 Khasi AR7

593 428 wedlock goes to the wife and becomes her property; but all other property is inalienable, and reverts to his family, as also does his corpse after death.

771 'RELIGION.—The religion of the Khásiás is demon-worship, or a jumble of enchantments muttered by priests who are sorcerers. They invoke evil spirits as the deputies of God and the instruments 775 of His pleasure or displeasure. The Khásiás believe in metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls. After death, human beings are transformed into monkeys, crabs, tortoises, frogs, etc. Though a future state is not denied, it is treated with absolute indifference, as beyond the sphere of responsibility; all rites, ceremonies, and observances bear reference to the welfare of mankind in this world. The spirits of their departed relatives and ancestors are invoked only in so far as they are considered to influence and have power 764 over the present life. The Khásiás burn their dead, and collect the ashes into urns, which are kept under a slab raised on four others enclosing a space. These monuments are of various kinds and sizes —one for individuals, another for a family, and another for a whole 614 clan. There is no caste system, but each clan is called after some object of nature, as the Oak clan, the Crab clan, etc., and these names entail certain restrictions beyond which intermarriage is 771 forbidden. The Khási religion may be briefly described as the practice of forms to cure diseases, and to avert misfortunes of all kinds, by means of ascertaining the name of the demon who is the author of the evil, and the kind of sacrifice necessary to appease it.

797 'CHRISTIANITY.—The Welsh Mission has been labouring amongst the Khásiás and Syntengs for thirty-two years. The Christians number about 1000 [according to the Census of 1872, the total number of native converts in the District is only 85]. There are four central stations—Cherrá, Shillá, Shillong, and Jowái —and twenty-three churches. Translations of the whole of the New Testament, and a portion of the Old, are now (1876) going to press, besides other religious books.

197 193 'LANGUAGE.—The definitions generally given of monosyllabic languages are far from adequate to enable us to assign to the Khási tongue its position amongst the Indo-Chinese family of speech. Still, in the absence of a better terminology, it may be described as monosyllabic in the agglutinative stage. The monosyllabic element greatly predominates. By far the larger number of the compounds are mere agglutinations (in a modified

697 In addition, a total of Rs. 899 (£89, 18s.) was expended on 316 buildings. The manufacturing account shows cash receipts amounting to Rs. 60, against an expenditure of Rs. 29, or a net profit of Rs. 31 (£3, 2s).

• 797 871 648 EDUCATIONAL STATISTICS.—The management of education in the Khási and Jáintiá Hills is entirely in the hands of the Welsh Calvinistic Mission, who first established themselves in the District about the year 1844. Though the Khásiás are naturally dull, and children are taken away from school before they have obtained more than a smattering of instruction, yet the perseverance of the missionaries has been rewarded by most satisfactory results. It is stated, in the Report of the Inspector of Schools for Assam for 1874-75, that 'a much larger proportion of the Khásiás know a little of reading, writing, and arithmetic than is the case, probably, in any other [562] District of either Assam or Bengal.' Female education, owing to the interest taken in this work by the wives of the missionaries, is also in a comparatively advanced condition. The missionary schools are largely subsidized by grants in aid from Government. The [212] teaching is conducted in English and in Khásí, the Roman character being used in both cases.

The following paragraphs are compiled from the Education Report for 1874-75, above referred to. In that year the total number of schools open in the District was 73, attended by 1866 pupils. As compared with the area and the population, these figures show one school to every 8·34 square miles, and one pupil to every 85 inhabitants. As compared with the total number of males under ten years of age, the number of boys only attending school (1,320) shows one scholar to every 13·1. The total expenditure on education in the same year was Rs. 13,302. 11. 3, or £1331, 3s. 3d.; produced Rs. 228. 3. 3, while the remainder (Rs. 7074. 4) was expended by the Missionary Society from its own funds. The average cost of educating each pupil was Rs. 10. 10. 4, or £1, 1s. 3½d.

648 797 872 PRIMARY SCHOOLS.—With the exception of the schools at Cherrá Púnjí, Jowái, Shillong, and Shellá, all the schools in the Hills may properly be classed as primary, though several are returned as middle vernacular schools. On this principle the total number of primary schools is 64, in 43 of which a little English is taught. These 64 schools had 1206 pupils on their rolls at the close of the year 1874-75, and an average daily attendance of 829, comparing

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currently with an average attendance of 632 in the preceding year. Of the pupils on the rolls, 130 were professed Christians, 56 Hindus, and 1098 Khásis. The total cost was Rs. 31035. 11. 6, or £3102. 13s. 3d., towards which Government contributed Rs. 3048. The average cost of each pupil was Rs. 6. 3. 3, or 12s., of which Rs. 3. 14. 1 represents the share paid by Government. The chief failure among the Khásis is stated by the Inspector to be in arithmetic. Four primary scholarships were awarded during the year by the Deputy-Commissioner, on the recommendation of the secretary to the Mission. These scholarships are of the value of Rs. 3 a month, or £3. 12s. a year, and are tenable for two years.

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Middle English Schools.—There were four schools of this class during the year under report, with 227 pupils on the rolls, and an average daily attendance of 143. The total expenditure was Rs. 4580. 13. 9, or £458. 5s., towards which Government contributed Rs. 1458. 8; the average cost of each pupil was Rs. 18. 13. 9, or £1. 17s. 6d.

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Female Instruction.—The Khási and Jaintiá Hills is the only District of Assam, and one of the very few throughout all India, in which female instruction can be said to exist. During 1873-74 the number of girls attending the schools increased from 140 to 200, or by more than 42 per cent., showing 2·7 girls at school to every thousand of the female population, as opposed to 1 in the Province generally. Of the number 114 were taught by Mrs. Hugh Roberts at Cherra Punji, and 18 by Mrs. John Roberts at Shella. During the year five of the girls were sent out as teachers, of whom one was placed in charge of the Shillong girls' school, which has 29 pupils.

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Normal School.—According to the classification adopted by the Education Department, the institution at Cherra Punji, under the management of the Rev. Hugh Roberts, is described as purely [illegible] number of pupils on the rolls was 23, and the average attendance 22. There is a class of 10 girls, and of the 16 teachers turned out during the year, 5 were girls. The total cost was Rs. 2030. 6. 6, almost the whole being paid by Government. The average cost of each pupil was Rs. 109. 6. 3, or £10. 19s., of which Rs. 105. 6. 11 represents the share of Government. The following paragraph, quoted from Mr. Roberts' Report, illustrates what the establishment have effected, and also the difficulties with which they have to contend:—"Cases have been brought to my notice during the past year

[illegible] OF KHAS AND JAGHTLA MAHLS.

[illegible]

of parents undergoing considerable privations rather than deny their children education; and in many families it has become a matter of ordinary routine to send the children to school. This only refers to the younger children; for after boys have attained their fourteenth or fifteenth year, their parents grow impatient for their pecuniary assistance. It is the custom among the Khasis to leave very young children to work, so that they may earn enough to support themselves as soon as ever they can manage easy and lucrative. It is common for a boy to realize from ten *pice* to five *annas* a day for his parents; and it is considered sufficient sacrifice for the latter to have kept him at school up to his fourteenth year.'

[illegible]

Khasi States.—The following is a list of the nineteen semi-independent Khasi States or Democracies, with the particulars of information that are available for each, taken from the latest Administration Report for 1874-75 :—

(1) Nongkhlaw or Wahadi.—Name of State, U Sumer Singh, age in 1876, 28 years; approximate population of State, 3[illegible]; estimated gross revenue—from market dues, Rs. 10; from cultivated tax land, Rs. 1[illegible]—total, Rs. 1[illegible], or £1[illegible]; products, rice, millet, myrtle or bay leaves, black pepper, Pipar nigrum; minerals, lime.

(2) Cherra or Sohra.—Name, U Dijon Singh, aged 40; population, forty; revenue—from market dues, Rs. 2000; judicial fees, Rs. 150; cultivated tax land survey, Rs. 200; cultivated holding in Sylhet, Rs. 1,500—total, Rs. 8[illegible], or £8[illegible]; products, cotton, millet, betel-nuts, rice, oranges, black pepper, Pipar nigrum, chillies, turmeric, ginger, and honey; manufactures, bamboo mats and bamboo baskets; minerals, lime, iron, and coal.

(3) Nongstoin.—Wahadidar, U Jaoh, aged 25, and U Bil Singh, aged 35, of whom the former can read and write both Khasi and [illegible]; judicial fees, Rs. 400—total, Rs. 700, or £70; products, oranges, betel-nuts, and pine-apples; manufactures, bamboo mats and bamboo baskets; minerals, lime and coal.

(4) Khyrim or Nongkrem.—Name, U Khar Singh, aged 50; population, 10,000; revenue—from pension allowed by the British Government, Rs. 1800; market dues, Rs. 3000; judicial fees, Rs. 400; cultivated tax land survey, Rs. 1500; contributions for State purposes, Rs. 1000—total, Rs. 10,000, or £1000; products, rice, cotton, millet, "Jaiti tears" cucurbitaceæ, cinnamon, caoutchouc